

J.C. Watts, Jr.  
Chairman  
4th District, Oklahoma

*House Meets at 10:00 a.m. for Legislative Business*

*Anticipated Floor Action:*

**H.R. 2684—FY 2000 VA/HUD Appropriations Act**



**H.R. 2684—FY 2000 VA/HUD Appropriations Act**

**Floor Situation:** The House will continue considering H.R. 2684 as its only order of business today. On August 5, 1999, the House adopted an open rule that provides one hour of general debate, equally divided between the chairman and ranking minority member of the Appropriations Committee. The rule waives points of order against the bill for containing measures within the jurisdiction of the Budget Committee that were not reported by it. It also waives House rules prohibiting unauthorized appropriations, legislative measures in an appropriations bill, and reappropriations. In addition, the rule accords priority in recognition to members who have their amendments pre-printed in the *Congressional Record*. The rule specifically makes in order one amendment—by Messrs. Cunningham, Spence, Buyer, Moran (VA), and Ortiz—and waives points of order against it. The rule permits the chairman of the Committee of the Whole to postpone votes and reduce the voting time on a postponed vote to five minutes, so long as it follows a regular 15-minute vote. Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

**Summary:** H.R. 2684 provides \$92 billion for veterans' benefits, housing programs, and various agencies dealing mostly with science, space, and the environment. This amount is \$3.3 billion less than in FY 1999 (which includes \$2.1 billion in FY 1999 emergency spending) and \$7.6 billion less than the president's request (which included a \$2.5 billion FY 2000 request for FEMA emergency spending and a \$4.2 billion advance appropriation request for FY 2001 for Section 8 housing). A majority of this funding, \$68.6 billion, is allocated for discretionary spending (\$1.2 billion less than last year) programs, while the remaining \$23.3 billion is mandatory spending (outside of the control of the Appropriations Committee).

A large portion of the bill's funding, \$44.1 billion, supports the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) efforts to provide extensive health, housing, education, and compensatory benefits to military veterans and their dependents, \$1.5 billion more than in FY 1999 and \$1.6 billion more than the president's request. The

measure appropriates \$26.1 billion for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), \$2 billion more than in FY 1999 and \$2 billion less than the president's request (which includes an advance appropriation request of \$4.2 billion for FY 2001). Specifically, the bill provides \$10.5 billion for Section 8 housing rental assistance (\$2.2 billion more than last year), \$970 million (a \$5 million decrease from last year) for homeless assistance, and \$4.5 billion for community development block grants.

H.R. 2684 provides \$7.3 billion for the Environmental Protection Agency (\$277.8 million less than FY 1999 and \$105.9 million more than the president's request). This amount includes (1) \$680 million for EPA research and development; (2) \$1.45 billion for Superfund cleanup work, which includes \$90 million for the "brownfields" program; (3) \$1.2 billion for clean water state revolving funds; and (4) \$775 million for safe drinking water state revolving funds. The bill also provides \$880.7 million for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The measure also provides \$13.3 billion for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)—\$1 billion less than in FY 1999 and \$924.6 million less than the president's request. Specifically, the bill provides \$2.8 billion for space shuttle operations and \$2.4 billion for the International Space Station. Finally, the bill (1) provides \$3.6 billion for the National Science Foundation, \$24.4 million less than in FY 1999 and \$274.6 million less than the president's request; and (2) rescinds \$3 billion in borrowing authority from the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA).

CBO estimates that enactment of H.R. 2684 will result in outlays of \$52.4 billion in FY 2000, \$25 billion in FY 2001, \$6.7 billion in FY 2002, \$3.6 billion in FY 2003, and \$3.7 billion in FY 2004 and subsequent years. The Appropriations Committee reported the bill by voice vote on July 30, 1999.

**Views:** The Republican leadership supports passage of the bill. President Clinton opposes the bill in its current form and has threatened to veto it. Specifically, the president opposes eliminating funding for the Americorps program and cites as inadequate the funding levels for NASA, HUD, the National Science Foundation, FEMA, and the EPA's operating program.

**Amendments:** As specified above, the rule makes in order the following amendment, debatable for 20 minutes.

**Messrs. Cunningham, Spence, Buyer, Moran (VA), and Ortiz** will offer an amendment to restore funding for the Selective Service Agency to the FY 1999 level of \$24.2 million (the bill currently allocates \$7 million for termination costs; the president requested \$25.2 million for the program). In addition, the amendment strikes language terminating the agency. To offset the increase, the amendment reduces funding for FEMA food and shelter by \$5 million; EPA science and technology by \$5 million; Home investment partnerships by \$1 million; the Chemical Safety and Investigation Board by \$1.5 million; and FEMA Emergency Management and Planning Assistance by \$5 million. **Staff Contact: Bill Berl (Cunningham), x5-5452**

At press time, the *Legislative Digest* was aware of the following other amendments to H.R. 2684:

**Mr. Bateman** may offer an amendment to increase funding for NASA's aeronautics, science, and technology account by \$105 million and offset the increase by reducing funding for the EPA's total budget by 1.55 percent (which is expected to yield savings of approximately \$113 million). The bill currently provides \$5 billion for this NASA account, \$678.2 million less than in FY 1999 and \$449 million less than the president's request. **Staff Contact: Michael Bishop, x5-4261**

**Mr. Gutierrez** may offer an amendment to increase brownfields redevelopment funding by \$5 million and decrease funding for NASA's human space flight account by an equal amount. *Staff Contact: Karla Armenoff, x5-8203*

**Mr. Gutierrez** may offer an amendment to increase funding for homeless grants by \$5 million and decrease funding for NASA's mission support by an equal amount. The bill currently provides \$970 million, \$5 million less than last year and \$50 million less than the president's request, for four homeless assistance programs under Title IV of the McKinney Act. *Staff Contact: Karla Armenoff, x5-8203*

**Mr. Gutierrez** may offer an amendment to increase funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships program by \$20 million and decrease funding for NASA's science, aeronautics, and technology account by an equal amount. The bill currently appropriates \$1.6 billion—\$20 million less than last year and \$30 million less than the president's request, for the HOME program—which provides funds to states, units of local government, Indian tribes, and others for acquisition, rehabilitation, and new construction programs to expand the supply and quality of affordable housing. *Staff Contact: Karla Armenoff, x5-8203*

**Messrs. Hinchey, Frelinghuysen, Franks, Smith (NJ), Gilman, Bass and Mdmes. Kelly and Roukema** may offer an amendment to prohibit funds in the bill from being used by the Department of Veterans Affairs to implement or administer the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation (VERA) system. VERA was established to provide medical care funding to regions across the country (with growing veteran populations) in a more equitable fashion. The system was created in response to findings indicating that the veteran population is shifting to different parts of the country but health care dollars are not. The VA's plan employs an allocation formula that ties funding for each of the 22 geographic regions to the numbers of veterans they actually serve. Proponents of the amendment contend that the VERA model does not provide adequate resources for aging veterans who remain in the Northeast and Midwest (where the veteran population is decreasing) and have subsequently resulted in a decrease in both the quantity and quality of health care services in those areas. *Staff Contact: Chris Arthur (Hinchey), x5-6335; Pamela Curtin (Frelinghuysen), x5-5034*

**Mrs. Kelly** may offer an amendment to prohibit funds in the bill from being used to close any Department of Veterans Affairs medical center. *Staff Contact: Al Garesche, x5-5441*

**Mr. LaTourette** may offer an amendment (#1) to increase funding for NASA's science, aeronautics, and technology account by \$68 million and reduce funding for the agency's human space flight account by an equal amount. *Staff Contact: Paula Steiner, x5-5731*

**Mr. LaTourette** may offer an amendment (#2) to increase funding for NASA's science, aeronautics, and technology account by \$68 million. *Staff Contact: Paula Steiner, x5-5731*

**Mr. Nadler** may offer an amendment to increase funding for Section 8 housing by \$305 million and offset the increase by reducing funding for the space station by an equal amount. *Staff Contact: Marissa Milton, x5-5635*

**Messrs. Nadler, Crowley, and Shays** may offer an amendment to increase funding for Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) by \$10 million and offset the increase by reducing funding for National Science Foundation Polar and Antarctic research by an equal amount. Currently, the bill provides \$215 million for HOPWA, equal to the FY 1999 level (not including \$10 million in FY 1999 supple-

mental spending) and \$25 million less than the president's request. **Staff Contact:** *David Greengrass (Nadler), x5-5635; Maggie Berman (Crowley), x5-3965*

**Messrs. Roemer and Sanford** may offer an amendment to effectively eliminate funding for the international space station program. Specifically, the amendment reduces funding for the project by \$2.08 billion (leaving \$300 million available for close-out costs). The amendment restores (1) \$350 million for veterans medical care; (2) \$50 million for Severely Distressed Public Housing (HOPE VI) grants; and (3) \$675 million for NASA's science, aeronautics, and technology account. The remaining \$1 billion is allocated for debt reduction.

In 1993, NASA indicated the space station would cost \$17.4 billion; however, that figure has continued to rise over the past six years. Recent NASA estimates state that the project cost may amount to \$26 billion. Congress has generally supported NASA's plan to build a permanently occupied space station in Earth orbit where astronauts will live and conduct research. NASA expects that research performed in the near-zero gravity environment of the space station will result in new discoveries in life sciences, biomedicine, and materials sciences. However, some lawmakers question why a space station is needed, how much it will cost, the degree to which it is dependent on Russian participation, and whether Russia can fulfill its commitments. **Staff Contact:** *Pete Spiro (Roemer), x5-3915; Jim McGuire (Sanford), x5-3176*

**Mr. Rogan** may offer an amendment to increase funding for NASA's science, aeronautics, and technology account by \$95 million. To offset the increase, the amendment reduces the funding for EPA's environmental programs and management account by an equal amount. **Staff Contact:** *Dave Silverstein, x5-4176*

**Additional Information:** See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXVIII, #24, September 3, 1999.



PLEASE NOTE: UNDER AN OPEN RULE, MEMBERS MAY OFFER NEW AMENDMENTS TO A BILL AT ANY TIME, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY HAVE BEEN PRE-PRINTED IN THE *CONGRESSIONAL RECORD*.

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